

Claims:

1. A method of determining feline or canine proBNP or fragments thereof comprising the steps of
  - providing a feline or canine sample,
  - contacting the sample with at least one antibody which, when determining feline proBNP, or fragments thereof, binds to at least one epitope in the region comprising the amino acids 20 to 42 and/or in the region comprising the amino acids 57 to 80 of feline proBNP, and when determining canine proBNP, or fragments thereof, binds to at least one epitope in the region comprising the amino acids 20 to 86 of canine proBNP, and
  - determining the presence and/or concentration of the feline or canine proBNP, or fragments thereof, present in the sample.
2. A method according to claim 1, characterised in that when determining the feline proBNP or fragments thereof, the at least one antibody binds to at least one epitope in the region comprising the amino acids 25 to 35 and/or in the region comprising the amino acids 45 to 55 and/or in the region comprising the amino acids 60 to 80 of the feline proBNP.
3. A method according to claim 1, characterised in that when determining canine proBNP or fragments thereof, the at least one antibody binds to at least one epitope in the region comprising the amino acids 25 to 41 and/or in the region comprising the amino acids 55 to 65 and/or in the region comprising the amino acids 74 to 86 of the canine proBNP.
4. A method according to any one of claims 1 to 3, characterised in that the at least one epitope comprises at least 3 amino acids.
5. A method according to any one of claims 1 to 4, characterised in that the at least one antibody is polyclonal and/or monoclonal.
6. A method according to any one of claims 1 to 5, character-

ised in that at least one further antibody binds to the at least one antibody or to the at least one epitope.

7. A method according to any one of claims 1 to 6, characterised in that the at least one antibody and/or the at least one further antibody is labelled.

8. A method according to claim 7, characterised in that the at least one antibody and/or the at least one further antibody is labelled with peroxidase, in particular horseradish peroxidase, biotin, fluorescent dye, gold colloid or radionuclides.

9. A method according to any one of claims 1 to 8, characterised in that the at least one antibody or the at least one further antibody is bound to a solid phase.

10. A method according to any one of claims 1 to 9, characterised in that the determination of feline or canine proBNP or of fragments thereof is effected by a method selected from the group consisting of radioimmunoassay, immune binding assay, Western blot, immunohistochemistry, enzyme immunoassay, lateral flow device (LFD, test strips), and combinations thereof.

11. An antibody or an antibody mixture, characterised in that it binds to at least one epitope in the region comprising the amino acids 20 to 42 and/or in the region comprising the amino acids 57 to 80 of the feline proBNP.

12. An antibody or an antibody mixture according to claim 11, characterised in that it binds to at least one epitope in the region comprising the amino acids 25 to 35 and/or in the region comprising the amino acids 45 to 55 and/or in the region comprising the amino acids 60 to 80 of the feline proBNP.

13. An antibody or an antibody mixture, characterised in that it binds to at least one epitope in the region comprising the amino acids 20 to 86 of the canine proBNP.

14. An antibody or an antibody mixture according to claim 13, characterised in that it binds to at least one epitope in the

region comprising the amino acids 25 to 41 and/or in the region comprising the amino acids 55 to 65 and/or in the region comprising the amino acids 74 to 86 of the canine proBNP.

15. An antibody or an antibody mixture according to any one of claims 11 to 14, characterised in that the at least one epitope comprises at least 3 amino acids.

16. A peptide, characterised in that it comprises at least 3 amino acids in the region of the amino acids 20 to 42 and/or in the region of the amino acids 57 to 80 of the feline proBNP.

17. A peptide according to claim 16, characterised in that it comprises at least 3 amino acids in the region of the amino acids 25 to 35 and/or in the region of the amino acids 45 to 55 and/or in the region of the amino acids 60 to 80 of the feline proBNP.

18. A peptide, characterised in that it comprises at least 3 amino acids in the region of the amino acids 20 to 86 of the canine proBNP.

19. A peptide according to claim 18, characterised in that it comprises at least 3 amino acids in the region of the amino acids 25 to 41 and/or in the region of the amino acids 55 to 65 and/or in the region of the amino acids 74 to 86 of the canine proBNP.

20. A peptide according to any one of claims 16 to 19, characterised in that the peptide is a chemically synthesized peptide, a peptide isolated from a sample, or a recombinantly prepared peptide.

21. The use of an antibody or of an antibody mixture according to any one of claims 11 to 15 for determining feline or canine proBNP or fragments thereof in a method according to any one of claims 1 to 10.

22. The use of a peptide according to any one of claims 16 to 20 for producing an antibody or an antibody mixture according to

any one of claims 11 to 15.

23. The use of a peptide according to any one of claims 16 to 20 as a positive control or as a standard for a concentration determination in a method according to any one of claims 1 to 10.

24. A kit for determining feline or canine proBNP or fragments thereof, comprising at least one antibody or at least one antibody mixture according to any one of claims 11 to 15, means for the qualitative and/or quantitative detection of a binding of the at least one antibody or of the at least one antibody mixture to feline or canine proBNP or fragments thereof, and, optionally, peptides according to any one of claims 16 to 20 and/or feline or canine proBNP or fragments thereof as a positive control or as a standard for a concentration determination.

25. A kit according to claim 24, characterised in that the means for qualitative and/or quantitative detection of a binding of the at least one antibody or of the at least one antibody mixture to feline or canine proBNP or fragments thereof comprise at least one further antibody.

26. A kit according to claim 24 or 25, characterised in that the at least one antibody and/or the at least one further antibody are labelled.

27. A kit according to any one of claims 24 to 26, characterised in that the at least one antibody and/or the at least one further antibody is labelled with peroxidase, in particular with horseradish peroxidase, biotin, fluorescent dye, gold colloid or radionuclides.

28. The use of a kit according to any one of claims 24 to 27 in a method according to any one of claims 1 to 10.